

Just Your Average High School Story

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Summary: Astrid is your typical popular girl - captain of the varsity basketball team, student council president, high GPA, and boys drooling at her feet. Hiccup is your average nobody - into art, editor of the school paper, really high GPA, and subject of the football team's torture. How do they end up becoming friends? Read and find out! Modern AU. Hiccupstrid. Rated T for minor language.

1. Chapter 1

Hey guys! I know these kind of stories have been done to pieces but I felt the need to write one... So, here we are! So, basically, in this story they're all about 18 or so, being high school seniors, and I kind of felt the need to change names around a bit. Hiccup and Astrid are the same, for what reason, I don't know. But, anyway, thanks for reading! I don't own HTTYD or any of the characters used here. So, without further blathering, here we go...

* * *

><p>"You ready for the big game tomorrow night?"<p>

Astrid glanced worriedly at her friend Rachel "Ruffnut" Thorston, who was sporting a crooked grin as she fixed her blonde braids and stared expectantly at her friend. Astrid shrugged carelessly, though her lips were stretched into a grimace.

"I don't know," she said honestly, haphazardly shoving her duffel bag into her gym locker. "I feel like we're ready, but I know that we're not." Ruffnut just bobbed her head up and down as she followed her friend out the locker room door, both of them gripping their basketball shoes in one hand and their water bottle in the other.

"I mean, we've been practicing really hard over the past few weeks," the blonde team captain said thoughtfully, rubbing her chin. "But that doesn't mean we're ready. I mean, these are the Berserker

Academy Warriors we're talking about! We've gotta go at least a half an hour after practice today to get ready!"

Astrid trailed off as the two reached the bleachers. Ruffnut rolled her eyes and plopped herself down, trying to work out a knot in one of her laces. "Yeah," she scoffed, slipping her shoes on. "Go ahead and tell the troops that. You've been overworking them you slave driver!"

Astrid glared down at her friend, giving Ruffnut a light punch to her shoulder before seating herself next to her. "We need the extra practice if we're ever going to keep being undefeated!" she snapped, slipping her shoes on and lacing them up in record speed.

Ruffnut, who had been rubbing her arm pitifully as she waited for her friend to finish, was chewing on her lip worriedly. "Well," she said after a bit. "You're not wrong. We do need to practice. Our free throws are getting a little sloppy." The blonde senior nodded with a victorious smirk and stood up, planting her hands on her hips.

"Okay girls!" she called out, referring to the members of the varsity basketball team scattered across the gym. The girls slowly made their way over to their team captain, basketballs shoved precariously under their arms.

"Alright, Coach Haddock couldn't make it to practice today, so let's get started! Let's begin with five laps!" Ruffnut and the girls groaned in mild, half-hearted protest but began running, their shoes squeaking and thumping against the court. Before Astrid's friend began running, she gave her a "playful" punch on her shoulder.

"Could've done a little less!" she said indignantly as she began jogging behind the other players. The team captain herself just grinned wickedly and brushed her braid behind her shoulder. Just as Astrid began to start running herself, she heard her name being called.

"Hey, Astrid!" She raised her head to where the gym doors were, her eyes searching for whoever the speaker had been, when someone came jogging over to her.

The guy in question was about 5 foot 11, with a mop of messy auburn hair and emerald eyes. He was tall and lanky, but still a bit muscular, like a soccer or basketball player, and he was quite attractive in a nerdy sort of way. He was wearing simple dark jeans with black converse and a plain button-up with the sleeves rolled up.

He had a camera strung around his neck and a pen perched haphazardly behind his ear, with a small notebook clutched in his hand. As the guy cracked a goofy smile that made his green eyes sparkle, Astrid's eyes widened at the stranger.

He seems so familiar... she thought to herself, gnawing on her lip. _He must be in some of my classes or something._ He reached up a hand to ruffle his messy auburn locks, while sticking his notebook into his back pocket.

"Hey," he said casually, his impish grin still very much on his face. "I'm with the school paper, and I wanted to do a story on the girls' varsity basketball team." She nodded and folded her arms over her chest, looking at the guy with mild interest.

"I was hoping I could take a couple pictures and you could maybe answer a couple questions?" he asked wistfully, holding up his camera in a hopeful way. Before she could stop herself her head was bobbing up and down. He shot her a delighted smile and retrieved his notebook and his pen before shooting her a look.

"You have some time right now?" She sighed heavily and nodded, immediately wanting to kick herself. Hard. and repeatedly. As mildly attractive as this dude was, she really needed to help her team practice for the big game against Berserker Academy.

Well, she thought. Would get some good rep for the team. Practically everyone reads the school paper.

As Ruffnut ran by, her cheeks tinted a light shade of red, Astrid stopped her with a forceful yank on her shirt sleeve. "Okay, once you get done with your laps, start stretches and the basic layup drill we've been practicing," she commanded in a somewhat forceful tone.

"Got that?"

Ruffnut, despite her flushed appearance, nodded and saluted her friend with a goofy smile. "You got it chief!" she said sarcastically as she began running again.

Astrid rolled her eyes as a smile tugged at her lips. When she turned back to the guy, she was a bit surprised to see him casting her a seemingly lovestruck gaze. Her eyebrows almost shot into her hairline as she looked at him.

"Uhâ€|" she began awkwardly, as this dude was beginning to creep her out. "You wanted to ask me some questions?" He shook his head at her voice, almost snapping himself out of his sudden daze, before smiling sheepishly and scrubbing at the back of his neck. The somewhat endearing habit he seemed to have made something flutter in Astrid's chest that she immediately brushed off.

"O-oh yeah!" he stuttered, pursing his lips. "C-can we go somewhere more quiet?" She nodded and brushed past him, heading for the gym doors. He followed suit, chewing nervously on his lip as his face got really warm all of a sudden.

As a last thought, before Astrid walked out, she turned and shot a look at her team, who were just finishing up their laps. "I need to go do something, girls. I'll be back in a minute. Until then, Ruffnut's in charge," she said over her shoulder before passing through the gym doors.

The team captain's words were met by a couple surprised gasps, worrisome groans, and a single triumphant laugh. Astrid led the guy into the utterly desolate hallway and leant up against the wall, folding her arms over her chest. The pair was to the immediate right of the gym doors, and they could hear the thumps of basketballs, the swish of the nets, and a few random shrieks that they ultimately

decided to ignore.

"Okay," she said as the guy got his notebook ready. "Shoot."

He grinned childishly, which Astrid surprisedly found kind of adorable, and pressed the tip of his pen to a sheet of paper. She saw some questions messily scribbled at the top of his paper, and saw that there were only a few. She involuntarily sighed in relief as he started talking.

"Okay," he began, glancing from his notebook to her and then back again. "So how do you think your team's basketball season has been going?"

She felt an excited smile beginning to appear on her face that she immediately forced down. "Well," she began thoughtfully, not meeting the guy's eyes. "Pretty good, considering that this year is the first in a long time that the varsity team has gone undefeated."

And it was true.

The year before, Astrid had been the only junior on the varsity team. The years before she was on JV. She was well liked for her athletic prowess because, somehow, every time they were losing a game near the end, she just shot out of nowhere and scored enough points for the win.

But, the year before, she had broken her wrist three quarters of the way through the season and couldn't play anymore. They lost almost all their last games without the fearsome Astrid Hofferson on point.

She, being the new team captain her senior year, had won all the games through her excellent leadership and her strategy with plays and positions. The past years had shot through Astrid's head as the newspaper guy nodded.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, he shot her an unreadable look.

"So far at least," he shot out almost absentmindedly, scribbling furiously on his notepad. She cocked an eyebrow at him, her lips forming a displeased grimace.

"What's that supposed to mean?" she asked bitterly, her words sounding more harsh than she had anticipated. His eyes widened. "Oh no that's not what I meant!" he tried to diffuse her, waving his hands around in surrender. "I just meant that the season's not over yet!"

She rolled her eyes upon realizing his slip of the tongue and reached a hand up to sweep her bangs out of her eyes.

"Okay," she said a little tiredly. "What else?"

He tried for an apologetic smile and bit his lip, his eyebrows knitting together. This, in turn, made for a completely awkward and strange face that had Astrid biting her tongue to keep from laughing. "There's been talk that the Berk Vikings could possibly go down against your rivals the Berserker Academy Warriors. Your thoughts?"

He looked at her imploringly, his emerald green eyes resembling a baby seal - something that's just too cute to say no to. Her facade melted at the cute newspaper guy as she let her arms drop weakly to her sides. She sighed deeply at the impending question, bringing a hand up to pinch the bridge of her nose.

Even the mere mention of defeat hurt the team captain. "Well," she began, forcing herself to keep the hiss out of her voice. "My thoughts are that we've defeated this team before - numerous times in fact - and that it shouldn't be that big of an issue. We're going all the way to state this year."

The newspaper guy nodded, gnawing on his lip as he scribbled unreadable chicken scratch onto his notebook. "Okay," he said happily, looking up at the team captain. "Last question." She felt the corners of her lips begin to tilt upwards as she cocked an eyebrow at him.

"Hmm?" she hummed, casually resting her head against the wall. "Since the boys' varsity team this year ultimately failed because of poor leadership," he began with a slight chuckle. "The pressure is riding upon your team to win state for Berk High School. Are you up for the challenge?" S

he actually let herself grin, a small laugh escaping her lips. "I know we can bring it," she stated boldly, raising her head to look at the guy. "And yeah. Always." He smiled and slipped his pen behind his ear again, his hand lingering just long enough to brush his auburn bangs out of his eyes.

He haphazardly shut his notebook and shoved it into his back pocket. "Thank you very much," he said politely, though his impish and somewhat endearing grin deterred his professional mood.

"Now, can I take a couple pictures?" She opened her mouth to object, but immediately shut it. Ignoring his forest green puppy dog eyes, she sighed deeply. "Why don't you take some at the game tomorrow?" she asked almost harshly. Where or why the hard edge came into her voice, she didn't know. He shrugged.

"Okay."

She quirked an eyebrow at him, pursing her lips. He relented really easily, she thought to herself. Huh. He randomly shook his head before he held out a hand, a small smile forming on his lips. She gingerly took it, as if it were made out of lit dynamite, and loosely shook it twice.

"Thanks again Astrid," he said kindly. She looked carefully at his face, and noticed some random things up close that she wouldn't have noticed otherwise.

Like the fact that he had a light spray of freckles across his cheeks and nose, and he had darker flecks of bronze in his gorgeous green eyes. He had the start of light brown stubble across his jaw and underneath his lip was a horizontal white scar.

She cocked her eyebrow at the mark but said nothing. As he released her hand, and started to walk down the hallway, she felt the

unnatural urge that she needed to know his name. That he seemed like a nice guy if you got to know him. She felt like she needed to know him, for some strange reason.

Before he turned a corner at the end of the hallway, she almost involuntarily blurted out, "Hey!" He whipped around, emerald green eyes wide. "I-I never got your name!" she called, mentally hitting herself for how lame she sounded.

Astrid Hofferson never stutters!

He smiled, a light chuckle escaping his lips.

"Hiccup," he said back. "Hiccup Haddock."

2. Chapter 2

Hey guys! How's it hanging o faithful readers? I've been good. Summer and all that. I'm sorry it took me a little while to get this one up! I just wanted to make sure I didn't make **_too_**** many mistakes on this piece-of-crap story of mine. Anywho, I do NOT own HTTYD or any characters used in this story! Remember to read and review, and if you have any comments or ideas, you can PM me! Here goes!**

* * *

><p>After the newspaper guy - uhâ€| Hiccup, had turned the corner, Astrid had stood in the hallway for a good five minutes, leaning against the tiled wall and gnawing furiously on her lip while considering why she had never heard of this guy before.</p>

She stood out in the hallway until Ruffnut poked her head out the gym door and yelled at her, bringing her back to Earth with the realization that she had a team to practice with and prepare for a big game. She had jogged back inside and started a simple rerun of their plays, but she just couldn't stop thinking about Hiccup.

She tried to force it out of her mind, like she usually did with things when she played basketball. Usually, whatever was haunting her head at the moment dissipated like an ice cube under hot water, and there was only her, her team, and the ball.

But for some odd reason, Hiccup Haddock was determined to stick with her.

Throughout practice, the auburn-haired newspaper geek flashed through her mind no matter if she was perfecting her layup form, shooting free-throws, or running herself into the ground. As practice finished, and her team limped into a circle to discuss times getting places and how bad they'd kick the Warriors' asses the next day, her head was somewhere else.

She grunted in frustration as the team dispersed with a half-hearted cheer and tried to get this shrimpy nerd out of her head. Why does she care so much about a guy she's never even met before? She quickly went down to the locker room and retrieved her blue and black duffel bag from her locker, still considering why she was so hung up on this fishbone-of-a reporter.

She pushed past several tired and drooping seniors, who were busily chugging down some Gatorades, before tromping up the stairs and heading swiftly for the exit. As she trudged out the gym doors and then the school's main entrance, realization hit her like a basketball to the face - all of a sudden and in a somewhat painful fashion.

"That's it!" she muttered as she walked cautiously through the cold Berk air to her car. "I don't know him."

And, truthfully, that's what stung the girl the most out of everything.

She had gone to school with the boy for almost 12 full years and she never bothered to talk to him, much less learn his name. She may be a popular athlete, but she's not a cliche heartless popular athlete.

She half-heartedly kicked at a clump of frozen dirt as she walked, warily eyeing the frost beginning to accumulate on the sidewalk. She pondered the fact that Hiccup did seem a tad familiar as she reached her car, a midnight blue Mustang that she got from her grandfather.

Anyway, back on the Hiccup subject, she didn't know, quite honestly. She let out a frustrated, muttered grunt and a pathetic shiver as she unlocked her driver's side door and hurriedly clambered in, haphazardly tossing her bag into the passenger's seat. She quickly shut the door and rubbed her hands together, trying to regain some feeling in the partially frozen appendages.

The thought that she couldn't remember him hurt her more than it should've, seeing as he was a nerd and she was a star athlete, but it did nonetheless. She gave herself a five-count, sucking in deep breaths of air and exhaling in exasperated puffs, before she jammed her key into the ignition and twisted it, causing the engine to purr to life.

She shook her head and decided to force her mind from Hiccup to driving, so she wouldn't end up crushed in a ditch.

Wouldn't be the best way to end a Wednesday night, would it?

* * *

><p>Hiccup couldn't believe that he actually got to talk to Astrid Hofferson.

He had shaken Astrid Hofferson's hand.

He had made Astrid Hofferson smile.

The boy was in his own personal paradise as he snagged his backpack from his locker and dashed out the door, the warmth in his chest successfully combating the cold Berk winds as he scrambled into his rusty red pickup truck and drove off.

As he drove, he had to constantly remind himself to focus on the road, and not how Astrid's hands fit almost perfectly in his, and how

deft and strong her fingers were, while still managing to be delicate and gentle, and how alluring her dazzling cerulean irises were when she smiled, (even if it was a slight, meager grin,) and how her sandy blonde hair was pulled back into a perfectly imperfect braid, and -...

He had to swerve back onto the road as his hands relaxed and his arms wilted at the thought of the goddess-of-a-high-school-senior that had him completely smitten. He shook his head at his stupid thoughts and groaned softly to himself and his pathetic, unrealistic intoxication.

He trained his eyes on the road in front of him as he slumped back in his seat, gnawing on his lip distractedly. He sat like that the rest of the way to his home, trying yet ultimately failing to think of anything else but his hopeless love life. He eased into his massive driveway and gazed upon his looming house with a sort of unease building in his chest.

He hesitated only a moment before he swiftly unbuckled and shoved his keys into his pocket. He leapt out of his car and stumbled towards his house with an undignified yelp and several clumsy slips due to the already-forming ice particles against the concrete.

When he reached the front door, he flung it open almost too eagerly and floundered inside, unceremoniously slamming it shut behind him. He sighed ruefully at the cold and slid his shoes off, slinging his backpack over one shoulder right before he heard a loud, resounding bark.

He braced himself for impact as a large, black Alaskan Malamute barreled into the entryway, tackling Hiccup with a gleeful whimper. The auburn-haired teen grunted as he was mercilessly thrown to the hardwood, a large, wet, warm tongue caressing his cheeks and nose.

"Augh!" he groaned, giving the large beast's muzzle a scratch. "Good to see you too Toothless!"

The obviously toothful (so to speak) dog gave his master's chin a final lick before leaping off him, meandering off to go chew on a squeaky toy or struggle to get some table scraps or something dog-like like that.

Hiccup pushed himself up, wiping the dog drool on his cheek onto the sleeve of his button-up before he ambled precariously through his house, bee-lining it for the stairs the first chance he got and hoping to every god imaginable that his parents didn't hear him come in. He scoffed at his hope, realizing that Toothless's bark most likely alerted his entire neighborhood and all of Southern China that he had arrived, let alone his own household.

His fears were confirmed with the, "Hi sweetheart!" he heard from the kitchen, which ultimately stopped him in his tracks. He groaned pitifully and spun around, plastering a fraudulent smile on his face before sauntering casually into his kitchen.

All he wanted to do was pitifully meander up to his room to finish some arduous calculus homework and possibly sketch some more designs for Thor knows what before going to sleep and thinking about Astrid

some more.

Who need dinner? Or family? Or a social life? Not him!

He spotted his mother, Valka Haddock, seated at the table, her reading glasses perched precariously on her nose. She was looking up from her pile of scattered bills, a loving smile on her face that immediately made Hiccup feel guilty about wanting to scurry away to his room to cry about some girl.

"How was school dear?" she asked in her faintly Nordic accent, her green eyes gleaming comfortingly. He smiled back, a genuine smile, walking over to place a kiss against her cheek before deciding that he was hungry. He shrugged carelessly as he turned to rifle through his refrigerator, brushing his auburn bangs back from his eyes.

"Oh y'know," he mumbled, his eyes searching for something that looked even mildly delicious. "School-ish things. Writing some more stuff for the school paper. Hanging with Fishlegs at the library and studying for one heck of a history test. Suffering through another day of the painted mildew they call cafeteria food. Again, school stuff." His voice dripped sarcasm that made his mother smile before she turned back to whatever stuff she was doing before he interrupted her.

"That's nice dear," she said as she continued, her eyebrows knitting together ever-so-slightly. He just nodded and snatched up an apple, slamming the fridge door shut as he crossed to the sink, rinsing his red fruit off. "The varsity team missed you at practice today," he commented offhandedly, shutting the water off and peering at his mother. His mom cast him a look.

"I needed to get these done," she said matter-of-factly, gesturing wildly at the paperwork scattered messily across the table. "I mean, they aren't going to do themselves!" He cracked a grin, taking a large bite out of his snack and nodding.

"Astrid seemed pretty overwhelmed, what with the big game tomorrow," he informed her, pursing his lips at the mention of his crush. "She seemed kind of stressed out."

She just smiled and looked up at her son, pushing her glasses further up her nose. "Ah, Astrid's a tough girl," she said with a lot more than a hint of admiration in her voice. "Smart, great leader, and beautiful to boot. She's got this under control." Hiccup gulped almost comically, a chunk of apple catching in his throat on the way down.

He sputtered for breath as his mother rambled on, talking about how Astrid was the best team captain the Berk Vikings had ever seen, and that under her leadership and, of course, her own coaching, they'd dominate state this season, and so on. As he finally got the apple from his throat and decided that he wasn't that hungry anymore, his mother finished with a satisfied smile.

"You'd really like her, Hiccup," she said thoughtfully, rubbing her chin. That's the problem! he wanted to scream out. But, he didn't, of course. His mom continued with a smile. "She's a really great young woman." She stifled a chuckle as she returned to her bills.

"Hell, you two would make a pretty cute couple," she said almost absentmindedly as she scribbled down random nonsense before shaking her head with a smile. Hiccup's heart thumped wildly in his chest at hearing 'Astrid' and 'Hiccup' and 'couple' in the same sentence, but he just forced it down with an uneasy smile.

"Yeah," he croaked pitifully, a light blush dusting his cheeks before he chucked his remaining apple into the trash and practically ran out of the room and up the stairs, his dog trotting close at his heels as he shut himself in his room without another word.

3. Chapter 3

**Well... This chapter happened. I'm sorry if it doesn't focus on the main idea so much, as it does explaining Astrid a bit more. And yes, I added some fluffy little bits in here because I can and I love writing them... It was truly inevitable, if you thought about it.
**

But, anyway, I don't own HTTYD or any of the characters used in this story. And I'm sorry if this chapter is a bit short or if there were any grammar mistakes or whatnot. Go right on ahead and PM me or review to give me some feedback or ideas or whatever you feel is necessary. Okay, now, onto the story!

* * *

><p>Astrid glared down at her calculus homework with a dissatisfied growl as she impatiently tapped her slender fingers against her desk. The numbers and letters and lines scattered strategically across the sheet just swirled off the page and began to backflip and somersault around her field of vision, making her head spin.</p>

She let out a groan and slumped back into her seat, keeping her icy blue eyes trained on her homework. Her mind slowly began sliding off of her homework and shifted to a mid-sized bruise that was forming on her right forearm.

She absentmindedly ran her fingers over the mark, staring at the purplish, plum-sized blob that was placed almost strategically in the middle of her forearm. Her fingers skimmed the swollen welt and circled it, inattentively marking where the swelling lessened and where it began to raise.

Her azure eyes examined the mark critically, her vast plethora of homework being forcibly thrust to the back of her mind. As if moved by an unseen force, Astrid's hand shifted to push a light amount of pressure onto the bruise, sending a light shockwave throughout her right arm that snapped her out of her daze.

Her eyes snapped back into focus and shifted over to her calculus book, which she immediately deemed the current bane of her existence.

You see, Astrid was on honor roll, and had AP classes and everything good like that, but she had a hard time with her math classes. She just barely scraped by with an A all throughout high school, but calculus really deemed itself an impossibly stubborn adversary that wouldn't go down no matter how many times things were explained to

her.

She herself was also too stubborn (not that she'd ever admit it,) to ask for help from a tutor or anything along those lines, causing her calculus grade to slowly plummet throughout the semester. She was close to a C now and was struggling to cope with the fact that her A streak was over.

In all honesty, if she could, she'd spend her entire life locked up in the school library, or in her art class class. She greatly enjoyed sitting down with a good novel or a sketchpad, not that she'd ever openly say that's how she spends her free time, curled up in the corner with her nose stuck in a book or doodling nonsense all over a piece of notebook paper. At the thought of paper, her mind took an arbitrary turn back to her homework, which she had painstakingly been doodling all over.

She took note of the basketball arcing into an unseen basket hidden behind the paper's text and began to shade in the ball, taking great care to add specific lines and bumps when needed.

As she finished the random sketch, she shook her head and snuck a glance at her laptop, which periodically flashed the time in big black numbers across the screensaver, a picture of her and her basketball team winning the championship at a tournament. She moaned inwardly as she saw the digital **12:29** flit across the screen.

She turned back to her paper with a stiff growl, her lower lip curling in with disgust. After an unsystematic moment of an intense one-sided glaring contest, Astrid noted a somewhat shrill cawing coming from across her room. She raised her cerulean eyes and shot a blank gaze at the cage hanging by her window, gears turning to substitute for the blank moments of idiocy the girl had had.

Another agitated squawk brought her back to life and she gnawed on her lip, her brow furrowing. Her blue and yellow parakeet Stormfly was flapping about her cage, cawing like she was trying to wake all of Northern Europe.

Astrid sent out a seemingly random series of scratchy whistles that amazingly quieted her bird down to the point where it wasn't all that she heard. The blonde senior had had her bird long enough to know that certain things had a certain effect on her. Such as that she didn't like it when the blinds were closed in the room, and that she needed to fly around the room at least three times a day.

Hell, Astrid had even learned a little bit of bird body language over the years. But, nonetheless, Stormfly was easily Astrid's closest friend, which the popular team captain didn't exactly want to come out and say to everyone she knew.

_ " __Hey, did you know that when I get lonely, I sit and rant to my pet parakeet? "__

And this, children, is How **NOT** to Make Friends 101.

Astrid cast a final, weary glance at her homework before she opted that she wasn't going to get anything done. She sighed deeply and pinched the bridge of her nose, pushing her swivel chair back and

standing up. After a moment of staggering around the piles of athletic bags and half-empty Gatorades and water bottles and scattered pieces of clothing, she reached her bird's cage by her window.

The blue and yellow bird let out a happy, almost relieved chirrup and hopped towards the door that her owner was fumbling to unlatch. Once the frustrated 18-year-old managed to unhook the door, Stormfly soared through the opening with a delighted warble, flapping her azure wings as she flew across the room.

The sight of the uncaged bird brought an unexplainable warmth to the girl's chest and caused the corners of her lips to tilt skywards. The parakeet cawed and skyrocketed across the room, landing periodically on strategically placed perches fastened to her owner's ocean blue walls.

The warmth expanded in Astrid's chest as her bird flew around delightedly, uttering happy trills and tweets at being let out of her somewhat confining cage. Astrid couldn't remember the last time she had felt this warmth other than when she was with Stormfly.

Suddenly, something struck Astrid's mind and made her feel like a pitcher of ice was being dumped down her shirt. She had felt this way before. Quite recently, in fact, it had only been about 8 hours or so.

When she had been with Hiccupâ€¦

She had to give a little laugh at the mention of the scrawny reporter whom she had just met. The laugh died right after it passed through her lips, and her brow furrowed. She began to ponder what the bony, yet mildly striking boy had done to make her feel the ever-elusive warmth in her chest.

Then, it hit her.

His gorgeous green eyes.

And his childish, toothy grin.

And the adorable dusting of freckles across his cheekbones.

She bit down on her tongue, hard, at the thought of herself finding this guy - dare she say it - cute. And it's not like she's one of those typical "Hey I'm popular and am obviously too good for you so get the hell out of my field of vision," high school girls.

She was more of the "Hey I'm a popular jock who's really indifferent about all these cliques and social pyramids and just really wants to be friends with everyone," sort of high schooler.

It was just the fact that he was sort of a nerd, so to speak. Hey, she may be an overall nice girl, but she still has an image to upkeep. If people even figured out that she thought a nerdy newspaper boy was cute, **BAM!** There goes her social status down the crapper.

She may be indifferent about the whole thing, but she still knows

that a good image is everything, and that includes love interests. She knew that she should be going for the football quarterback or the captain of the boys' varsity basketball team, but she found them repulsive and disgusting.

Their main interest at heart was to get into her pants, and they had a careless way of not bothering to hide it that made most other girls go wild, but not Astrid. Sure, she was friends with some guys on the basketball team, and the football team, and even some wrestlers, but she knew their tactics with girls.

And she hated it.

So, she made it a point to herself not to ever go out with any of them; to not let them win. As stupid as it sounded, it had worked for the 18-year-old for several years, and she made no plans to stop anytime soon.

Her mind shifted back to Hiccup as she threw herself on top of her bed, nestling into her blue and yellow blankets. Stormfly had long since stopped flitting around the room, coming to a rest at a perch above Astrid's headboard and crooning softly to her.

Astrid realized all of a sudden that Hiccup's looks weren't the only thing that had made the evasive warmth form in her chest. It was the look in his eyes when he gazed at her. S

he was used to guys staring at her, (no arrogance intended,) but their eyes were filled with lust, a certain eagerness and craving that made her feel uncomfortable and often lead to her excusing herself to go to the bathroom until she felt she was ready to go back.

But when Hiccup looked at her, she only saw a gentle look filling his emerald green eyes; an unfamiliar affection and tenderness that she never observed in anyone.

It was kinda nice; being able to stand comfortably with a guy without having to cross her arms over her chest or walk away and give herself a five-count before she decked someone. Before she could help it, the corners of her mouth tilted up precariously as she reached up to sweep her sandy bangs out of her eyes, fatigue suddenly weighing down her body as if it were made of bags of wet sand.

Stormfly was perched above her human's head, looking down at the girl with an intelligent look filling her dark eyes. Astrid just smiled with a light chuckle, shaking her head and reaching out to her bird. The blue and yellow parakeet gave a happy warble and flapped down to land precariously on her girl's finger, nuzzling her head affectionately into her hand.

The blonde just smiled at her companion, the auburn-haired paperboy flitting through her head once again as she settled onto the edge of her bed. No, she wasn't falling for him.

She barely knew the guy for Pete's sakes!

But, she did want to get to know him more.

She thought that she needed a genuine, kind guy like him in her life

amidst the liars and the cheaters and the assholes that surrounded her on a daily basis. She smiled again at her bird and gently moved her to the perch above her bed, staggering over to her dresser before she could pass out in mid-step. She quickly changed into a more comfortable garb of mesh basketball shorts and a t-shirt.

She quickly slid back into bed, sighing comfortably at the warmth as she snuggled her head into her pillow. Her bird chirped at her, and Astrid stuck out an arm as she partially raised her upper body. Her bird landed on her arm as she pointed her other hand at the cage across the room, where the faint moonlight was filtering in around the windowpanes.

Astrid sighed before snapping out a quick, yet gentle command at her parakeet.

"Cage."

The one word received a light trill and a painless, affectionate nip to Astrid's ear before the bird flew across the room and into her cage, the door slipping into place behind her. Astrid laughed despite herself and slid further underneath her covers, reaching out to switch off the lamp on her nightstand.

As the room became shrouded in darkness - save for the moonlight filling the far side - Astrid let out a short series of light, melodic whistles that rang through the room. Shortly after, the whistles were returned in a higher pitch, receiving a happy smile from the girl.

As she nestled her head back down in her pillow, her eyes fell shut like the curtain after a bad comedic play, and she drifted off into a dreamless sleep.

4. Chapter 4

**Ah gods, sorry guys! I've been having some sever writer's block lately and have been straggling along to be able to write this chapter! That and the fact that I've been out at a cabin with no wifi for the better half of a week didn't help matters... But, I am sorry, nonetheless, and I'm trying to get these off. **

And, just as a thought, if you guys like my writing, and have a Tumblr account, follow me at deadly-nadder-trainer! It's a HTTYD blog and I take asks to write oneshots! So, if you have a Tumblr and some ideas for oneshots, come and hit me up!

Okay, you all know the drill. I don't own HTTYD or any of the characters used!

* * *

><p>In first period, Hiccup couldn't keep his eyes off of Astrid.</p>

Granted, she did sit in the row in front of him and he couldn't look up at his teacher or at the board without coming across her intricately entwined blonde hair or her slender, muscular back. But, nonetheless, it seemed as if the cerulean-eyed beauty was all that he

could concentrate on, forget his teacher preaching on about ineffectual information they would end up forgetting, no doubt in his mind.

Who needs to know about the government and things when you can write and draw?

The teacher, a vertically-challenged, hunch-backed man with a mop of thinning silvery hair and cold grey eyes, paced across the front of the room, crying out overly-complicated descriptions of random documents while using the point of his walking stick to jab at illegible chicken scratch scrawled across the board. The students seated in trim, orderly rows across the room were all sagged down into their seats, their eyes dull and almost glazed over.

Meanwhile, Astrid was slumping lower and lower into her seat, and Hiccup could see her shoulders sink down and her head loll back, coming to a rest on the back of her plastic seat. Her cobalt eyes were half-lidded as she stared idly at the old, withered man sermonizing as he smacked the end of his stick against the board, his voice growing more and more perturbed by each passing second.

With each scattered thwack that rang out through the room, the students' shoulders hunched up ever so slightly and their eyes narrowed just in the slightest.

It was an involuntary reflex for them, ever since the elderly teacher had heaved a History book at one of his students when he got agitated. Then, after that, he had lobbed his walking stick into the fray and conked an unsuspecting nerd in the head.

After the boy had been sent to the hospital with a minor concussion, the whacks made every student flinch and shy away. Surprisingly enough, he hadn't gotten fired, as he told the story that the kid had seemingly plummeted out of his chair and clobbered his head on a desk.

Ah yes, just another day with Mildew Fungus as your AP Government teacher. Hiccup's gaze shifted from the overly-discontented teacher to the blonde-haired siren seated in front of him, butterflies beginning to form a mosh pit in his core.

Today, she was wearing a simple pair of khaki pants and her blue, gold and white Vikings basketball jersey - which the whole team wears the day of a game - with her sandy blonde hair plaited into an ornate braid with an unornamented black headband holding back her bangs.

Hiccup couldn't believe how gorgeous the team captain looked in such simple attire, and he couldn't help but smile lovingly at her, supporting his head on his hand. He took notice of the fact that her eyes slowly angled downwards at her desk, and her right arm started making subtle movements, her lips upturning into a tiny, contented smile.

He quirked an eyebrow at her and casually stretched upwards so he was able to peer over her shoulder. He could see her willowy fingers curled around a flaxen pencil, the graphite cascading across the paper in graceful swoops and sharp, defined lines. Hiccup's interest peaked as her picture unfolded, depicting a clever-looking bird with

feathery wings spread out as if it was about to take flight.

The bird had scattered blob-like markings around its wings and small, delicate, outstretched talons that looked as if they could do some damage. The avian had small eyes that gleamed with intelligence and an elegantly curved beak that was opened as if the bird was squawking. Hiccup's brow furrowed as he began to gnaw on his chapped lower lip.

Hmmâ€|_ he thought to himself, his voice echoing around his head.
Looks a little like a parakeet.

He continued watching her pencil define the bird, with added details to the feather vanes on the long wings and tail, and further attributes on the tarsus, making the bird look more realistic. Hiccup's breath suddenly abandoned him at the aesthetic drawing that the girl in front of him rendered, for he didn't know that she could draw this well.

He could've stared at the drawing for hours, just examining the graphic details and thought put into the pencil drawing, if not for the loud squawk of indignation that came from the front of the room. "Miss Hofferson!" Mr. Fungus screeched, his nose wrinkling in disgust.

Astrid's head shot up, her sapphire blue eyes wide in revelation and her lips pressed into a line of shock. Hiccup could see the color drain from her face as the elderly teacher glowered at her, his knuckles white around the handle of his walking stick. "Would you care to share your note with the class?" She shook her head so fast the newspaper editor was afraid that it would come loose and fall off.

Mr. Fungus then made a sound Hiccup could only describe as an animalistic growl as he narrowed his silvery-grey eyes. "Well then," he snapped venomously, jabbing the honed point of his stick at a small definition scrawled in black marker. "Would you care to explain what this term is, if you claim that you were, indeed, listening?"

Astrid's mouth flapped open and shut like a dehydrated fish as she examined the writing, tiny, pathetic squeaks escaping her lips. Mr. Fungus cocked an eyebrow, placing his hands on his hips and positioning himself in a way that made half the class cringe and look away with tears pressing up against the backs of their eyes.

The other half was too busy chuckling at the straight-A student fidgeting in her chair helplessly as she mumbled out random words under her breath.

Hiccup winced - he couldn't stand there for much longer and watch her squirm.

He leant forward in his seat, over his desk, and hissed "The electorate," under his breath. He saw the basketball player's eyes widen in remembrance and almost immediately, she loudly blurted, "The electorate!" Mr. Fungus's eyes enlarged and his mouth twisted into a harsh scowl.

"Correctâ€_|" he mumbled, obviously a little disappointed that she had

gotten the curveball-of-a-question correct. He turned back around and began lecturing the class again, his tone noticeably a few notches darker than usual. Hiccup half-heartedly began to focus on his teacher, listening to the wrinkled man's nasally voice resounding throughout the mid-sized room so he wouldn't get in trouble like Astrid did.

Mildew wouldn't stand a second offense in one class period.

Hel, he barely handled one without busting an artery!

As the newspaper editor watched his teacher preach on, a tired groan escaping his lips, he saw a piece of paper slip onto his desk, folded neatly into quarters. He quirked an eyebrow but nonetheless grabbed it, warily eyeing his teacher as he opened it as quietly as possible. Once it was unfolded, all Hiccup could see were a couple small sentences scrawled in the upper half in messy, blocky handwriting.

Ah man, I owe you one, dude. He would've bitten my head off. Thanks Hiccup! - Astrid_

He turned the slightly rumpled piece of paper over and caught sight of a drawing on the other side - the parakeet from before. A lump swelled in his chest and a warmth spread through his cheeks, and suddenly, it became hard for him to breathe. His lips upturned into a sappy grin as he shifted his gaze over to the blonde basketball player seated directly in front of him.

Yep. He was falling for her, and harder than he'd care to admit.

When the blasting, bothersome bell sounded, signaling that class had ended, Hiccup had barely realized any time had passed, and therefore was completely unprepared when the roaring mass of people surged by his desk, jostling him and essentially making him lose hearing in one ear.

He was too busy watching Astrid get swept out of the room to care, or notice, for that matter. One of her basketball friends - Hiccup thought her name was Rebecca or something like that - had her arm in a firm grip and was forcibly yanking her through the doorway and out into the flood of people in the hallway, yammering into her ear the whole way.

The bright smile that Astrid cracked made Hiccup's heart melt, and he could've sworn that he heard his heart begin to beat faster through the drone of the students and the angelic choir orchestrating through his head. He sat there for an instant before realizing that the next class had already begun to spill in, and that he was going to be late for English Lit if he sat there for much longer.

He seized his book and his scattered notebooks and stuffed them haphazardly into his blue and black backpack before dashing out of the room, rudely pushing past the dozens of seniors trudging haphazardly through the doorway.

* * *

><p>Once Astrid passed through the doorway that lead to the calculus

classroom, she felt the accumulated stress from the rest of the school day triple and weigh her down. An uncontrollable tic formed in her right eye as her shoulders rolled forward, her lips stretching into a wide grimace.<p>

She slunk over to her seat in the front of the room and sat down, setting her backpack on the floor next to her. Her teacher, (who doubled as her basketball coach,) Mrs. Haddock, was seated at her desk in the corner of the room and had been looking over some worksheets when the blonde had walked in.

"Why, hello Astrid," the brunette woman addressed in her faint Nordic accent with a delighted smile, setting the papers that were previously in her hands on her desk. "Ready for the big game tonight?"

Astrid smiled and bent over to retrieve her book, her usually nimble fingers fumbling to unzip her bag. "Hey Mrs. Haddock," she greeted, finally managing to get a hold of her ever-elusive calculus book. "Yeah, I think I am. The girls are, too." She straightened, allowing her book to fall onto her desk with a subtle thump. "We ended up practicing until 5 last night," she recalled wistfully, her lower lip instinctively moving between her teeth. "The Warriors are going down."

Valka smiled at the girl, smile lines crinkling around her eyes. "Good, good," she said almost absentmindedly as she collected her papers once again. "And I'm really sorry that I couldn't make it last night. I just had some things to do at home." Astrid glanced down at her half-finished homework with a grimace.

After the past few weeks of bombing homework and quizzes in calculus, there was no way she was sweeping by with an A anymore. She was down to at least a C-, maybe and probably more.

She shook her head ruefully before replying in a low tone. "It's fine. We understood." Valka just bobbed her head up and down in such an offhand way that it reminded Astrid of Hiccup. Her lip returned to its rightful place between her teeth as she began scrawling in random answers in the empty blanks that had been strewn across her paper.

When the bell sounded, and the last few stragglers had rushed into their seats, Mrs. Haddock began class, beginning the whole thing with a, "Okay, everyone pass your homework up." that stopped Astrid's heart.

_Oh, shit. _

* * *

><p>As Astrid sat on the bleachers, cheeks turning an unnatural shade of crimson, she forced herself to intake tiny sips of water as she watched her teammates scurry across the court. She vaguely noticed her coach pacing in front of the nearly empty bench, yelling across the hardwood at the scattered, wheezing Vikings.<p>

The resounding cheers of the students packing the bleachers was just white noise as she watched the game. Her gaze shifted from her team to the glowing scoreboards placed on either end of the gym, which

showed two sets of numbers that made a fire form in Astrid's stomach.

Home: 36.

Away: 41.

Now, the team captain enjoyed seeing this when they were at an away game.

She fathomed seeing this every away game.

She tolerated seeing this in the first half or so of any home game they had.

But, this wasn't a thing that the team captain wanted to see in the fourth period with only 5 minutes left on the clock.

Now, the Berserker Warriors were known for three things. One, their dirty way of playing. Two, their special way of escaping penalties. And three, the girls' extreme amounts of excess body hair.

Coach Haddock let out a loud, disgruntled sigh as a tall, rather beefy gal with armpit hair peeking out of her number 28 jersey knocked a Viking to the floor with a loud grunt. As the brunette mammoth let out a mocking, nasally laugh, the chocolate-haired girl on the court suddenly leapt to her feet, launching herself at the Warrior with a booming growl that Astrid heard from across the gym.

The ref quickly shuffled to intercept her, his face strained as he struggled to restrain the whole 140 pounds of pure fury that was about to tackle her opponent. The other ref just rolled his eyes and motioned towards the Warriors' side, blowing sharply into his whistle.

Valka groaned and motioned to the scorekeepers for a substitution, pursing her lips and tugging nervously at her dark blue polo shirt. "Hofferson!" she barked, running her hand over top of her face anxiously. "Switch in for Inman!" Astrid gave a solemn nod and practically leapt off the bench, flying across the court to the heaving girl slumping at point position.

"Come on, Piper," Astrid said gently as she reached the senior. "Go get some water." The brunette nodded, clapping her on the shoulder as she stumbled back to the bleachers. Before she staggered off the court, Astrid could've sworn she heard Piper mumble something along the lines of, "C'mon Astrid, you can do this." The blonde senior just grinned and motioned for the girls behind her to get into their defensive position.

The Warriors took their places just as the big 28 girl began dribbling the ball up the court with a loud yell of indignation. "I got 28!" Astrid barked loudly, moving to plant herself in front of the aforementioned varsity player. The large brunette sneered at her, her caterpillar eyebrows knitting together in concentration as she charged.

Astrid immediately got low, her shoulders over her knees and her knees above her toes, and stuck her arms out as if to say, Bring

it._

She balanced on the balls of her feet and began shuffling about as the girl approached her, dribbling the ball safely away from her. Astrid feebly swiped at the ball once the girl got too close, but she swiftly backed out of range, surprisingly nimble for a girl of her...err...stature.

Then, the behemoth made the simple-minded mistake of trying to pass the ball to an equally-hairy teammate, and Astrid smiled, grabbing it and rushing off down the court before anyone could blink twice.

But, naturally, once they did realize she had bolted, they were unceremoniously stepping on her heels as they rushed down the court, not being able to completely overtake her.

Thor dammit, she thought to herself, gnawing aggravatedly on her lip as she continued attempting to escape the toes pressing down on her ankles. _How are they so swift when they're so...big?_

But, despite the barbaric leviathan drooling down the back of her jersey, she managed to make a clumsy layup before she fell to the court, landing hard on her stomach. She could faintly hear the ref's whistle blasting and feel the ball slapping her calf as she laid on the court and regained her bearings, shaking her head swiftly at the simple mistakes she had made.

She knew she had a bit of time when one of the Warriors began cussing up a storm at the fact that she had scored a point. As the refs began their feeble attempts to calm her down, she groaned softly and pushed herself up. When she looked like she was in the raised position of one of those "girl push-ups", a hand rested on her shoulder that caused Astrid to glance up.

She wasn't surprised to see Ruffnut standing there, her eyebrows creased as she fiddled with her matching blonde braids. She immediately stuck out a hand, which Astrid took gratefully. As she hauled herself up and mumbled out a quiet "Thanks," the team captain shot a quiet, concerned gaze at the scoreboard, which ticked the 36 into a 38 and received cheers from the stands.

The blonde just sighed and clapped her friend on the shoulder, marching back to the opposite side of the court to set up the preliminary defensive position again.

"Alright ladies," she said confidently when the Vikings came into earshot, shooting her team a mischievous grin.

"Let's kick some Warrior ass."

End
file.